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Re: General Situation in Lvivska Oblast, Ukraine

End 1964, Early 1965

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHOD EXEMPTION 382B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

dob ca 1899

Source: Mr. KUZMA (fnu), formerly of Skveryava, Lvivska Oblast, Ukraine

Date: May 24, 1965

1. Source, 66 yrs of age, and his wife, 68 yrs of age, arrived to the United States by plane from Moscow through Paris, and landed in New York City on April 26, 1965. They came for good to their younger son, Mychaylo Kuzma, who resides at 1525 Blavis St., Philadelphia, Pa., 19141. Their elder son resides in Passaic, N.J.

Source and his wife lived permanently in their homevillage Skveryava, Lvivska Oblast, Ukraine. Source had not traveled much, and the only cities that he frequently visited were Lviv and Zolochiv. Before coming to the USA, Source was working in the kolhosp "Kolos" (Spike) in the building brigade. His wife was not working at all because of her health condition (asthma) which troubled her for the past 20 yrs. Before the war Source was engaged primarily as a village carpenter, and in addition to it he had some land for cultivation, horses, and cows.

Source and his wife are Ukrainians, Catholic of the Byzantine Right, and very religious people. Before the war and after, till his departure, Source was a church-elderly. He is not well educated person and his schooling is limited to a very minimum. However, he is very conscious and serious person, and he does not exaggerate nor dramatizes his narrations. He has forgotten many facts, and especially names and dates, and his knowlegebility thus has suffered. He nor his wife were not the members of the Party, never imprisoned nor exiled, although he had some problems because of his sons.

It took Source 4 yrs before he received permission to come to the United States.

All the documents had to be presented in 4 copies and he was told they went to Mos-

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cow. When he received a note from the US consul stating that the USSR has granted permission for him to emigrate to the US, the only instruction in the note was to have X-ray taken, blood test, and smallpox vaccination.

When Source went the first time to the militia to ask them the permission to go to the United States and find out all the procedure connected with it, he was asked why he and his wife want to go there. When he explained to them that their children want them to come there because they have not seen their parents for a long time and want them to be together, Source was told that he and his wife should not go there, their home is here, his sons should not have left their country but stay with the parents, they are traitors, etc., and if they want to see their parents they should come here. To all this Source answered that it is all the same with him but he would have to write to his sons and tell them to stop making the preparations in order to save them troubles and money because he will not ~~would~~ be permitted to leave the Soviet Union. Then, Source was told not to write that but wait patiently a while and perhaps something could be done about the permission to go to the United States.

Source had to pay quite a sum of money as bribe in order to have all the necessary documents made in order and in time. It was necessary to have, in addition to the certificates of birth, marriage, death, etc., character reference, biography, own and that of parents and grantparents, and many other papers. It was necessary for ~~xi~~ Source and his papers to go through all the channels, starting with the Silrada to Obkom, and everywhere it was necessary to pay a bribe in order to have all the matters properly handled and without a delay. He payed as a bribe over 250 rubles and some vodka too when it should have cost him legally not more that 40 rubles. The officials, however, are very careful to accept the bribe and the best way to do it is through someone that knows the official well. At the militia Source payed some money to the chief through one of the clerks whom he knew.

Source and his wife were the first ones from their village that were permitted to go to the United States. No one believed that they actually will be permitted to

leave the USSR because so far they have never heard of a couple being permitted to do so.

Source and his wife, accompanied by his cousin and his wife, took a train from Lviv to Moscow and they paid 15 rubles a person for the fare. In Moscow they stayed for a week in Yaroslavskaya Gostinnitsa, and they paid 34 rubles for that week. They had there one large and very clean room with 4 beds and a sink; the bathroom, however, was in the corridor. There are 4 or 6 buildings of that Gostinnitsa numbered 1,2, etc., which is located about 1 klm. north of the Kremlin.

From Moscow Source flew from the Sheremetevo's airport which is quite distant from the city. It took him 2 hrs by taxi in order to get there from the Yaroslavskaya Gostinnitsa. The customs control at the airport were superficial and the only thing that they were questioning was the Soviet currency. Source was on the plane for the first time in his life, he enjoyed the flight very much and stated that the American plane which he flew ~~from~~ from Paris was more luxurious and nicer.

2. Source was interviewed in his present home, at the address mentioned above, on May 21 and June 18, 1965.

## II

1. There are many changes that took place in the village Skveryava since the Russians occupied the western Ukraine in 1944. First of all, about a fifth of the population was exiled for one reason or another but mostly for collaborating with the underground. They were replaced by Lemky whose part of the land passed to Poland after the end of the WW II.

The school, which before 1944 had only 6 grades, was enlarged and in the present has 11 grades. The majority of the teachers are Ukrainians and the language of instruction is Ukrainian too. The Russian language is taught there only as a subject.

The people in Skveryava as well as in the neighboring villages drink very heavily. This also includes high ranking officials and the Party members as well. The high ranking officials drink enjoying their good living, while the rest of the people drink in order to escape the reality.

However, the people at the present are more nationally conscious than ever before. In 1918 Source, only 16 yrs of age then, joined the Sichovi Strilci (the Ukrainian Sich Rifles) because there was an order that every young man should do so, but the word Ukraine had no meaning to him and he did not know what he was fighting for. At the present, however, the situation is completely different. The people are nationally conscious, willing and ready to fight, if only the opportunity would present itself suitable for this purpose.

Practically all the members of the militia are local Ukrainians. The same is with the officials in the Silrada, however, they all are Party members. The official language there is Ukrainian because the officials themselves know Russian very little. In Rayrada in Zolochiv there are many Russians or the Ukrainians from the eastern Ukraine. They all know Ukrainian very well but they use Russian language at all times. Even if someone speaks to them in Ukrainian they answer in Russian. The same language situation as in Rayrada exists among the officials in the Oblrada in Lviv.

2. Khrushchev was disliked by the people. With his economic planning and his virgin lands he led the people to starvation and misery. He has not done anything good for the people in other fields either. All the improvements and easement of the situation like release of some of the political prisoners, less of the political arrests, little more of freedom, etc., were all done by Malenkov ~~short~~ during his short lasting period which Khrushchev would not dare to change.

There was even an attempt on Khrushchev's life in Lviv in 1962. Khrushchev was passing through Horodecka Street and someone or some group put under one part of the street some kind of a time-bomb which exploded unfortunately only minutes after Khrushchev passed by. The destruction was great. All the windows in the vicinity were broken, the street and the trolley-tracks were torn out and it took a long time to repair it.

It was Podgorny who contributed the most to the removal of Khrushchev. While Khrushchev was relaxing in Crimea, Podgorny went to Moscow complaining that the people of the reachst republic in the Union are starving -- no food nor even decent bread (the bread was made of a poor grade corn flour). This situation can not last any longer and he demanded that something should be done about it. So with his initiative and other's imagination Khrushchev was removed.

The people are very sorry that Beria could not succeed. Source heard from the people that he conspired with Americans -- Americans were supposed to come by planes and Beria was to give orders not to shoot at -- and in this way the communist regime was to be overthrown. This is what the people were saying in the countryside.

3. The kolhosp "Kolos" (Spike) in Skveryava was established in 1950 after a long ~~phase~~ persuasion and use of force. This kolhosp does not have any particular specialization but concentrates on a few different products -- 1/3 of the land is allotted for sugar-beet, 1/3 for wheat, and 1/3 for corn. However, corn, the most favored crop by Khrushchev, should be replaced with something else this year. There was also some part

of the land allotted to vegetable. The director of this kolhosp is BUCHYNSKYI (fnu), a local Ukrainian from the neighboring village, who took over the administration of this kolhosp not too long ago. He is very young man, who finished his military service only about 5 yrs ago. The former director of kolhosp was a heavy drinker and spendthrift of the state's goods, which he used for financing his all-night entertainments, and this was the reason for his dismissal.

All the work in every kolhosp is well planed in advance and is calculated according to the "trudodni", which means, how many days it should take in order to complit certain job or accumulate so much output in a year. Every worker is being ~~pk~~ usually payed 30 kopeks, 1 klg. of wheat, and 1 klg. of straw for his cow per "trudoden", therefore everyone is working very hard in order to finish his job as quickly as possible or to produce as much output as possible ~~in~~ in order to make a little more money. Besides, there is a bonus, usually in the form of a product, for those who finish their work in advance or have larger outputs than was calculated. All of this works well in the theory but in practice it works not all the time the way it was planned and then one earns hardly enough to survive.

This calculation of a job is quite a ridiculous thing. It is all right to calculate how many days it should take for the builders to build a building, it might be all right to calculate how much of an output should be taken from a certain piece of land because a drought or a poor harvest is only a supposition, but to caloulate how much milk a milk maid has to get from each cow or how many piglings a maid has to rear from each sow is a little too much.

The bonuses for those who finish their job in advance or produce above the norm is usually in the form of an output — those working on the wheat fields receive 100 kg. of wheat a year, those working on the sugar-beet receive sugar, pig-maids receive pigs, others receive their bonuses usually in the form of wheat, 100 klg. a year.

In order to have a larger outputs the workers do all sot of things. For example, the

milkmaid might add a little water to the milk in order to have a little larger quantity of milk. The milk is always examined and if a cow yields a heavy milk a little water would not do any harm but if the maid adds too much of water, esp. to the inferior milk, she is usually caught and punished.

After the removal of Khrushchev the pay was raised in some of the wealthier kolhosps to 50 kopeks and 1 klg. of wheat per "trudoden". The workers were told recently that the pay will soon be increased again and they will have assigned bigger household plots. At the present, each family is ~~allowed~~ allowed to have 26 ars (60 ars=1 morg) of household plots. This is without regard to the size of the family or number of adults working in the kolhosp. If the plot around the house has more than 26 ars ~~the authorities~~ the authorities ~~leave~~ leave it that way up to 30 ars, if it has more than that they cut off a part of it and assign to someone else, if it has less than 26 ars they assign another piece of land somewhere else. For the larger family 26 ars is not enough to supply their own needs let alone make some profit of it. Therefore everyone who can is bribing the land surveyors in order to have the measurements fixed and to gain a few additional ars assigned. The household plots will be soon increased and this time the addition will be for the larger families or those having more adults working in the kolhosp.

Most women are working, in addition to milk-maids and pig-maids, on the sugar-beet plots or on the vegetable plots. Work on the vegetable plots is not hard and besides it there is an advantage because one can always bring home some vegetables for the family. But the work on the sugar-beet plots is very hard, and moreover so because the work extends into the late fall when the weather is already bad.

4. In the country many churches are closed. However, in the Source's area there is at least one church for every two villages. There is also a great shortage of priests in the villages. First of all there are not many priests, and secondly, most of them do not want to stay in the villages because they can be much better off in the cities.

In Skveryava recently the people lost the priest because he moved to the city where he could be closer to his married daughter. The village had some problems to get a replacement. The committee had to go to the consistory in Lviv with the petition and only then after a long search and careful consideration they managed to get a young but a very good priest. The committee was fortunate to be tipped off by the consistory's secretary, whom they gave some money, as to whom not to accept because there are many available priests but they are heavy drinkers and very immoral too.

Until a few years ago the priests were better off financially because in addition to their monthly salary payed to them by the church committee all the donations from christenings, weddings, and funerals were theirs. At the present the situation is a little different because the committee has to keep a very exact bookkeeping of all the income (including that from collections, ~~donations~~ donations, christenings, weddings, funerals, etc.) and expenditures. The salary of the priest usually depends on the size of a parish and its collections. In the Source's village Skveryava the church committee is paying to the priest 100 rubles a month.

The church services and customs did not changed after the war at all except that everything is now in the Ukrainian instead of Churchslavic and the church is Orthodox instead of Catholic. The sermons are in a good christian spirit relating to the proper church holiday or a church event, and there is not a word Ukraine, Ukrainians, or anything in a nationalistic spirit, as it used to be before the war. At times and some priests might openly condemn in their sermons the anti-religious propaganda but there is never any mention about the government nor its leaders.

The people are very religious and church going. Of course, the youth does not frequent the church to the same extent as do the adults because there is too much ~~press~~ pressure on them. Russians are as much church going people as Ukrainians. While in Moscow on the Palm Sunday, the day before his departure, Source went to a small church near by Yaroslavskaya Gostinnitsa and was surprised by the number of people



there. The church was filled to its full capacity but Source could not stay there too long because it was so hot there that he felt that he might faint.

5. The people are of general opinion that the underground and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army should have ended its activities at the end of the WW II. During the German occupation they have done a lot of good but with the coming of Russians its activities became less centralized and more chaotic since they had to defend themselves against a strong Russian Army, equipped with tanks and airplanes, determined to liquidate their activities quickly and completely. They had also less support from the people because of great persecutions by the authorities. The authorities punished anyone even for the smallest amount of cooperation with the underground, and the punishment was a standard measure -- the ~~whole~~ whole family was exiled for 25 yrs to some remote part of the Soviet Union. From Source's village, which had before the war 600 families, about 100 families were exiled.

After coming of Russians in 1944 the first thing the authorities have done in Skverjava was to gather the heads of all families and interrogate them about the missing members of their families, usually their children. Of course, everyone replied that their sons and/or daughters were taken away by the retreating Germans and they have no idea of their whereabouts. During these interrogations was always present one of the local trusted members of the Silrada who had to verify all the answers given by the people. Of course, he always verified the answers as being correct, knowing that for telling the truth he will lose his head. They were even quicker and louder when verifying the statement when they knew that the person in question is somewhere with the UPA.

After the preliminary interrogations a special detachments of the Army together with the MVD were constantly raiding the villages in search for hidden members of the underground. If one was found he was hanged immediately and the owner of the property and his family was exiled for 25 yrs. These raids were not very effective and it was very seldom that the MVD managed to find a member of the underground because the

people had a good hiding places and how to hide someone. The MVD was especially interesred in the collaborators of the underground knowing that without them the underground does not have a chance to exist. Therefore they came upon another method of searching. They knew that the members of the underground and of the Insurgent Army were coming to the villages at nights to get the food and other necessities. They were knocking at the door saying "uncle open the door, we are no strangers". So the MVD ~~was~~ was imitating the same method, using for this purpose captured members of the underground who spoke the same dialect, because otherwise the people would recognize the members of the MVD. When the people learned about this method of the MVD they stopped opening their door at nights and as a result of it the underground suffered a lot. The only time they opened their door was when they recognized the voices and the particular individual shined a flashlight at his face so there would be no doubt as to his identity. Otherwise they would say that they do not know who it is and will let no strangers in in at night.

In 1944 when the Russians occupied the West Ukraine many young people who were not yet active in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army joined it. Some of them joined it in order to avoid serving in the Russian Army but most of them joined it thinking that after Germany will fall Americans will start a new war against the Soviet Union and they will be helping Americans chasing the Russians out of the Ukraine. After the WW ended and the hope for the war between America and Russia, and the liberation of the Ukraine was gone, many young people refrained from joining the UPA. However, the UPA needed new people because its fighting against the Russian occupational forces was more and more difficult every day. Therefore the UPA had to order some young people to joine their forces and if the parents refused their sons to do so, the whole family, including the son, were shot at night. There were many such instances in the Sources village and in the vicinity.

Many members of the underground as well as their collaborators were betrayed. Usually it was done by the women, as a result of ~~quarrels~~ quarrels among them, and frequently

even the innocent people became victims.

However, all of this ended in 1950 when minister of the Security ~~Kov~~ KOVALCHUK issued a decree in which he pardoned all the members of the underground and their collaborators if they will come out into the open, admit their guilt, and promise to be a good citizens and work from now on for the betterment and growth of their ~~communities~~ communities and the Soviet Union as a whole.